The Genealogy and History of
SAMUEL AESCHLIMAN
up to his marriage to
Ida Sommers

Part I

Written by Stella Aeschliman
and type by
Frances Aeschliman, daughters of
Samuel and Ida Aeschliman
1979

In Switzerland the name Aeschliman was spelled with two letter Ns at the end of the name. The last N was dropped in the United States of America.

THE FAMILY TREE OF SAMUEL AESCHLIMANN

Father's branch

Samuel Aeschlimann
Dec. 8, 1860, to
Oct. 31, 1931

Grandfather
Christian Peter Aeschlimann
April 7, 1819, to
Dec. 19, 1881

Great-grandfather
John Aeschlimann

No birth and death dates recorded.

Great-grandmother
Margaret Funkanton

Grandmother
Julia Roulet
Dec. 22, 1832, to
March 23, 1874

Great-grandfather
August Roulet

No birth and death dates recorded.

Great-grandmother
Marie Stahley

All of Father Samuel's ancestors recorded here were German-Swiss. His parents lived in the French section of Switzerland. Originally his ancestors lived in the German section of Switzerland. The location of Grandfather Christian P. Aeschlimann's homestead is in La Saignotte-Cret-Le-Locle, Canton Neuchatel, Switzerland. In Berne, Switzerland, on the second floor of the "Lengnau Chathedral," built in 1770, is a history of the Aeschlimann family. (This information was submitted by B. Julia Aeschlimann, Nice, France, No. 7, Rue Rossini. She is a daughter of Christian Jr. Aeschlimann and niece of our father, Samuel.)

Grandfather Christian P. Aeschlimann was married thrice. First wife was a Miss Guerber, a sister to Rev. Guerber. Two children were born to this marriage--Christian Jr. and Louise. She died some time after the second child was born.

Second wife was Julia Roulet. She was a sister of Rev. Philip Roulet. Ten children were born to this marriage. Samuel was the fourth child. Grandmother Julia died when Ernest was two years and nine months old.

Third wife was a Mrs. Ummel, the widow of our Uncle Christian Ummel's uncle.

Ten children were born to Christian Peter and Julia Aeschlimann. Their names follow:

	Name	Born	Married	Died
1.	Marie	Sept. 10, 1855	Christian Ummel	Oct. 11, 1934
2.	Elise	Dec. 11, 1856		At age 16
3.	Fred	Sept. 24, 1859	Dec. 1882, to Rosa Rubin	March 10, 1945
4.	Samuel	Dec. 8, 1860	March 22, 1900, to Ida Sommers	Oct. 31, 1931
5.	Paul	Oct. 25, 1862	In 1893 to Phebe Dieffenbach	Dec., 1938
6.	Rosina	June 29, 1864	Nov. 12, 1888, to William Rubin	Oct. 31, 1951
7.	Arnold	June 18, 1866		At age 4
8.	Sophia	Sept. 26, 1867	Nov. 16, 1886, to Christian Schluneger	March 2, 1934
9.	Henri	Jan. 10, 1870		Died in infancy
10.	Ernest	June 13, 1871	In Jan. 1901 to Esther Ensley	Dec. 6, 1952

Grandfather Christian Peter, Grandmother Julia, Elise, Arnold and Henri are all interred in the village of Les Brenets, Switzerland.

SAMUEL'S EARLY LIFE

Samuel was usually called Sam. Later in life he often went by the letters S. R. Aeschliman. Since he had no middle name, the first letter of his mother's maiden family name "Roulet" was taken.

Sam grew up on a dairy farm. At age three he was baptized and grew up in the German Reformed Church. When quite young he milked cows and delivered milk to customers in the village nearby. The milk was delivered in a one horse drawn two-wheeled cart. One morning the cart upset and all the milk was spilled. It made him sad that the customers would get no milk that day, and it was hard for him to tell them; but everyone was so understanding and kind, feeling so sorry that this had happened to him, he being so little.

Sam and his brothers and sisters went to a French-speaking school and their father taught them to read, write and speak German at home. They spoke the German-Swiss dialect at home too.

SAM LEAVES FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

During Sam's teen years an uncle by the name of Rev. Philip Roulet and some cousins by the name of Schluneger left Switzerland for the United States of America. They sent back a good report of the new country. It was truly a country of opportunities. Sam had a desire to go to America too, so in the year of 1880 at age nineteen he left his home and country for this land of opportunities. After a safe ship voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, which took at least six weeks, he arrived in America. He went to Pulaskie, Iowa, where his Uncle Roulet (as Sam always called him) lived with his family. The Schluneger cousins also lived there.

Within a few months, or a year, Brother Paul and Sister Rosina wanted to go to America too and take Ernest along. Ernest was ten years of age at that time and not getting along well with his step-mother. His own mother died when he wasn't quite three years old. Because of his youth he wasn't given permission to leave Switzerland without a guardian of a certain age. Paul and Rosina were not old enough to qualify, but Sam would be. So Sam returned to Switzerland and brought Brothers Paul and Ernest and Sister Rosina to America. They arrived in America before December 1881. So Sam crossed the Atlantic Ocean three times before he was twenty-one. He mentioned this fact to us several times. He was twenty-one years of age on December 8, 1881.

LIFE IN DAVIS COUNTY, IOWA

Sam attended a country elementary school for 90 days soon after coming to Iowa. There he learned to read, write and speak the English language. He also worked for a farmer by the name of Swartzendruber. He joined the Mennonite Church the first year in Iowa. His Uncle Philip Roulet was pastor of that church.

In December 1882, Brother Fred and Rose Rubin were married in Switzerland. In the year of 1885, Fred and wife Rose and small son, Arnold, and youngest sister, Sophia, arrived in Iowa. They made their home in Davis County, Iowa, near the Aeschliman brothers and Sister Rosina, or Rose, as she was called.

By this time a number of people in Iowa were going west to Washington Territory. Farm land was good there and available, some still to homestead. Sam and Paul were so situated by now that they could make the move.

COMING TO WASHINGTON TERRITORY

In the year of 1886, Sam and Paul and Sister Rose loaded all their belongings, which included several horses, into a railroad freight car. They also traveled in the freight car to care for their horses. They traveled westward across the United States. (Not certain if they went by way of Spokane, Washington, or San Francisco, California. Then north along the coast by ship as far as the Columbia River, then up the Columbia and Snake Rivers to Almota, Washington.) Some of the first settlers to Washington went by way of San Francisco, California, as the Northern Pacific Railroad wasn't completed until 1884. The Aeschlimans arrived in Washington in November 1886.

Sam and Paul rented land from a widow, Mrs. Hungate, for a few years, and Sister Rose kept house for them. The farm was located a few miles east and north of Almota. At the end of one year of farming they paid all their debts, and all they had left was less than a dollar. But in spite of that they were in good spirits, confident that there would be better years. Sam had an accordian and played that often through the winter months and they sang hymns together. Sam said they never sang as much as they did that winter.

One winter Sam taught a singing class in Almota. That is teaching to sing by notes without an instrument such as an organ or piano. A tuning fork gave them the tone of high C, and from that they got the tone of other notes after they were trained to do so. Eventually, they could sing all four parts of a song as a quartet or choir. Much enjoyment was received by attending such a class.

FRED AESCHLIMAN AND CHRIS SCHLUNEGER FAMILIES ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON TERRITORY

In the year of 1886, Sister Sophia married Chris Schluneger on November 16th in Davis County, Iowa. Chris was a widower with a young daughter named Lavina.

The next year, Brother Fred and wife Rose and three sons, Arnold, Lou and Will; Chris Schluneger and wife Sophia, and daughter Lavina,

all went west to join the other Aeschliman brothers and Sister Rose. (Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nauert were also in the group.) They went by way of San Francisco, California, in a railroad freight car, with all their belongings, then by ship up the coast to the Columbia River and up the Columbia and Snake Rivers to Almota, Washington. They arrived there in November 1887.

They all lived together that first winter in a little four-room house in Almota owned by Henry Spaulding. Fred worked in a blacksmith and wagon wheel manufacturing shop. Edward and Sam were born in Almota. In the year of 1893 or '94 they moved to school land in the canyon north of Almota and about a mile southeast of Will Rubin's farm. Ira and John were born on this farm. The boys attended the Onecho School.

When Fred and family lived in Almota the first few years, Sam and Paul and Rose rented and lived on the Hungate farm. At this time Will Rubin, a brother of Fred's wife Rose, came to Washington Territory. A few years before coming to Washington, Will left his home in Switzerland and came to America. He went to Ohio where a brother lived. From there he came to Washington with Paul Maurer. They came by train across the midwestern states and arrived in Spokane, Washington, then hitchhiked to Colfax as they had very little money left. Will visited his Sister Rose and family in Almota quite often. Sam, Paul and Rose also visited the Fred Aeschlimans. Before long a romance began with Will and Rose Aeschliman, which came to a marriage in Pullman, Washington, on November 12, 1888.

(In the year of 1889, Washington Territory was admitted as a State to the United States of America.)

EARLY PIONEER LIFE IN WASHINGTON STATE

In the year of 1889 or '90, Will and Sam rented or bought land in the Onecho district from Paul Maurer and also some railroad land joining that. Over the years they bought more land at different times enlarging the farm. This farm is located a few miles north of Almota on both sides of the Colfax-Almota road and Goose Creek running through it. A log cabin was by the creek. They moved into this cabin and began farming and building the farmstead.

The next few years were indeed busy for them. Some of the land in the low places was broken for farming, but the hills were in natural bunch grass. Trees were all along the creek and were used for heating and cooking. The bunch-grass covered hills were broken for farming. A plot was set aside for a garden and fruit orchard.

Probably the first building they built was a barn for horses which were used to do the farm work, and to shelter a cow or two to provide milk and meat. Then shelters were built for a few chickens and pigs.

Whenever a farmer needed a barn or house built, relatives and neighbors came and helped build it, and it was done in a short time.

about 1897

In 1895, an eight-room two-story house was built on the Will Rubin farm.

In those early days there were no telephones on the farms, so whenever anyone became quite sick and needed a doctor someone would ride horseback to Colfax and get advice and medicine for the sick one. Or if the doctor felt it important to see the patient, he would come out on horseback or drive out in a buggy.

THE SETTLING OF OTHER AESCHLIMAN FAMILY MEMBERS

The Fred Aeschliman family lived on the canyon farm for about six years, then bought land in the Onecho community. This land is located on the west side of the Colfax-Almota road and about two miles northeast of the Onecho School and church. The family moved on this farm in 1899 and built it up over the years. Some of the land was in natural state of bunch grass when they purchased the land.

Mary and Martha were born on this farm. Eight sons and two daughters were born to Fred and Rose. The eldest, a son born in Switzerland, died in infancy. All the other children were raised to adulthood. Their names are: Arnold, Lou, William, Edward, Samuel, Ira, John, Mary and Martha. Arnold died in 1912. All the others lived a full life.

Sophia and Chris Schluneger moved from Almota to Palouse, Washington, about 1889 and rented a farm there. In the year of 1893, they had a total crop failure due to a very rainy season. In 1896 they moved back to the Spauling house which had been moved to the top of the canyon north of Almota. They rented land from Henry Spaulding for two years, then bought land near Wilcox and moved on this farm in 1898. This farm was located over the hills northwest of Fred's farm.

Six sons and six daughters were born to Sophia and Chris. Their names are: Albert, John, Alma, Fred, Ernest, Mary, Lydia, Lorene, Emma, Mabel, Chester and Louis. Chester died in infancy.

Paul felt called of God to preach the gospel, so in 1891 he left for Halstead, Kansas, to study for the ministry. Paul finished school in the spring of 1893. From there he went to Pulaski, Iowa, and married Phebe Dieffenbach and returned to Washington with his new bride.

On July 1st of that same year, Rev. J. B. Baer, Field Secretary of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America visited the Onecho community and helped organize the Mennonite Church of Onecho. In the afternoon of that same day, Paul was elected pastor of the new church and the following day he was ordained as elder.

Pastor Paul and wife Phebe bought a farm about one mile east of the Onecho Church and on the south fork of Goose Creek.

They adopted a daughter and named her Beulah, and a few years later they adopted a son and named him Rupert.

Ernest came to Washington about 1896. Ernest picked a local girl for his wife by the name of Esther Ensley. Her parents were some of the first settlers of the Onecho community. All their children were born there.

Ernest and Esther were married in Jan., 1901, and settled on a farm a few miles east and south of Fred's farm. Five children were born to them, and all died in infancy or early childhood. This was a great sorrow to them. About a year after the last child died they adopted a baby boy and named him Foster.

In the 1940s they adopted Harry Roulet, a grandson of Rev. Philip Roulet. Harry lost his mother in childhood and made his home with the Ernest Aeschlimans since his teen years and was faithful as a son, helping with farm work and after his marriage rented the farm.

THE FAMILY MEMBERS IN SWITZERLAND

The half brother, Christian Jr., married in Switzerland, and after a number of years they also came to America. They settled in Detroit, Michigan. They raised a family of four children--one son and three daughters. If I remember correctly, the oldest daughter, Nettie, married and died a year or more later. The second daughter, Julia, was gifted and was in opera for awhile then gave it up as she felt it wasn't the place for a Christian girl. She then took the position of governess to the daughter of wealthy parents who lived on an island. When she no longer was needed as governess, Julia and parents returned to Switzerland to live. Not sure about the youngest daughter and the son. Someone said the daughter died in America before the parents and Julia returned to Switzerland.

The half sister, Louise, married a Mr. Heger. They stayed in Switzerland and made their home there. We have no more information of them. (In 1980 received information that Mr. Heger's first name is Rodolphe. They had children, the number unknown. One was named Eugenie, probably another Rosalie. Some Hegers lived in or near La-Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.)

Sister Marie, or Mary as she was called, married Christian Ummel a year or more before Sam left for America. Six children were born to them in Switzerland. They came to America in October, 1889. Ernest was a baby of only six weeks. Chris Ummel had borrowed money to

make the journey to America, hoping after a ship trip of several weeks to continue on to Washington State. Mary wanted to live near her brothers and sisters, but money was running out. Chris had three brothers near Bloomington, Illinois, so this is where he landed with a wife and six children, and $5.00 in his pocket. Chris' Brother Ben rented a farm and nearby was an empty house. The Chris Ummel family lived in that and Chris worked for his Brother Ben for $17.00 per month. Mary knitted mittens and stockings for neighborhood families. They repaid the loan to come to America in one year. Eventually, they bought a farm in the vicinity of Bloomington and raised a family of eleven children--seven daughters and four sons. Their names are: Mary, Lena, David, Sophia, Martha, Ernest, Paul, Sam, Bertha, Esther, Clara.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE AESCHLIMANS

Sam and his brothers and sisters were baptized in early childhood into the German Reformed Church and grew up to become devout Christians. When Sam came to Pulaski, Iowa, he joined the Mennonite Church of which his Uncle Philip Roulet was pastor. (Very likely the other Aeschliman family members also joined that church though there is no record.) When they came to Washington Territory in 1886-1887, and settled in the Onecho community about four years later, they found a small Sunday School being held in a primitive school house on a hill about one and one-half miles northeast of the farm of Will Rubin and Sam. They were happy about this and begin attending regularly. The Sunday School had its beginning from a Bible Class organized in 1876 by a Methodist preacher, the Rev. M. S. Anderson. He was a circuit rider missionary organizing Bible Classes and Sunday Schools in newly settled communities. He would make the rounds of visiting them and would bring the group he was visiting a message from the Bible.

With the Aeschlimans, Rubins, Schlunegers and other Swiss Mennonites from Iowa and Ohio attending, the Sunday School got quite a boost. According to a history of the Onecho Church, the Methodist group greatly appreciated the presence of the Mennonites, since musically inclined leaders were badly needed and their Christian way of life was an inspiration to them.

Sam soon took the leadership in music. There being no musical instrument, he got the tune to begin a hymn with a tuning fork.

There being no regular minister for the group, the Mennonites felt the need of one. At about this time, Paul Aeschliman felt called of the Lord to become a minister of the gospel, so in 1891 he went to Halstead, Kansas, for two years to study for the Christian ministry.

In the spring of 1893 Paul R. Aeschliman, accompanied by a newly acquired bride, returned to the Onecho community with several new families who also established their homes here.

On July 1 of the same year, Rev. J. B. Baer, Field Secretary and Traveling Minister of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, visited the community. The Mennonite group met at a private home where an organization was formed, Rev. Baer serving as chairman of the assembly. It was decided to term the new organization, The First Mennonite Church of Colfax, Washington. In the afternoon of the same day, Paul Aeschliman was elected as pastor of the new church. On the following day he was ordained as elder, the service being held in the primitive school house. Rev. J. B. Baer presided at both services.

Now there were two denominations, each with a small flock and only the little school house to hold their services. They decided to continue to worship together. The spirit of Christian cooperation was begun which continued for many years. Beginning at this time, and continuing for many years, was the arrangement of the Mennonite pastor occupying the pulpit three Sunday mornings a month, while the Methodist pastor occupied it one Sunday morning, or two on some occasions. Pastor Aeschliman preached on the Sundays allotted him, most of the time he preached his sermons in German followed by its repetition in English. The Sunday School was always carried on as a union project.

For two years following Pastor Aeschliman's entrance into the ministry, services were held in the little school house. The congregation was growing and a larger building was needed. So in 1895 a meeting was held to make plans for a church building. There was a problem--should the building belong to the Methodists or the Mennonites, there being about the same number of each group.

After due consideration, the Methodist folks said to the Mennonites, "You men are good carpenters, you build the church and we will all help." Thus the problem was settled. J. J. Tompkins deeded the land for the church. This was near the little school house. The building of the church was begun and though times were hard and money scarce these obstacles were overcome by the wonderful cooperation of the entire membership. Thus with many hands a nice meeting house was a reality. Both groups were present at the dedication of the church and the pastor of each group took part. The entire membership of both groups made it plain that, "We are of one fold and one Shepherd: Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." The two groups continued to worship in the same manner as before the church was built. The church was usually called The Onecho Church.

> (Much of this information was taken from "The History of the Onecho Church," written by Dwight Ensley, a son of pioneer parents.)

In May of 1896, Pastor Aeschliman met with a committee of ministers of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America in the small village of Pratum, Oregon, to organize the Pacific District Conference of Mennonites. There were several small Mennonite Churches in Oregon and two in Washington and some in California.

After this, Pastor Aeschliman often served these churches when they were without a pastor or had difficulties and needed advice and guidance or encouragement.

Later, he frequently associated with the establishment of churches and ordination of ministers. Much of the time he would serve them on the Sundays when the Methodist minister preached at the Onecho Church.

During the week, Pastor Aeschliman worked his own little farm a mile east of the church.

FARM AND FAMILY GROWTH AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

As the years came and went the farmsteads were built up and farming extended. At first only the valleys and lower parts of the hills were farmed. Gradually the natural bunch grass was broken up for farming higher up on the hills where it was much steeper. They found it possible to farm. They added more fruit trees to their orchards and planted more garden.

Gradually more farm buildings were added and more cows, pigs and chickens raised for food of growing families. As more land was farmed, more horses were needed. These were bought from farmers who raised them as a side line. Or, if they had a good mare, they would raise their own horses from colts of the mares.

The Fred Aeschliman, Chris Schluneger and Will Rubin families were growing in numbers. A new baby arrived in each family about every two years.

Will and Rose Rubin's first baby was a son born October 8, 1889. Five more sons and two daughters were born to them over the years. Their names are: William, Emma, John, Elmer, Alvin, Leslie, Pearl and Harvey. Elmer died in infancy.

Sam remained single until 1900. He continued to live with the Will Rubin family until then. He and Will farmed their land in partnership. He became quite active in church work though he was quite timid and found it difficult to speak before a crowd. In time it became much easier. He said if there wouldn't have been such a need for workers he never would have become so involved. His first assignment was probably leader of the singing. They had no musical instument such as an organ or piano. A tuning fork was used to get the pitch of high C. Anyone with a good ear for music and was trained to read notes could get the tone of all the other notes from high C.

Some winters he taught a class of young people to sing notes and then the four parts of a song. They enjoyed such a class very much and it improved the singing in the church services too. The congregational singing was like a choir--all four parts could be heard if one listened. It made an impression on me when I was young.

No farm work was done on Sundays and they attended church services regularly. Afternoons were often spent in visiting or taking relatives or neighbors home from church to dinner. Sam enjoyed visiting and was a good conversationalist. He also entertained visitors by playing his accordion.

Pastor Paul continued to be called to visit churches in the Pacific District Conference. While visiting these churches he became acquainted with families of these churches. One man's family, who lived in the Waldo Hills east of the Pratum Church, by the name of Gottlieb Sommers made an impression on him. There were three sons and three daughters in the family. The oldest daughter, Ida, was about twenty-one. The thought came to Paul that Ida would be a good wife for Brother Sam. In the near future the Pratum Church was to host the Pacific District Mennonite Church Conference. Pastor Paul encouraged Sam to attend the conference with him which was held in June 1899. Sam went and the Lord must have been working with Pastor Paul--Sam was to be a guest at the Sommers' home while attending the conference. Sam and Ida became acquainted and began corresponding after Sam returned to his home. After a few months, Sam proposed marriage to Ida, and she accepted. Plans were made to marry in March of 1900.

In the meantime, Sam and Ernest went on a trip to the midwest to visit their half brother, Christian, and family in Detroit, Michigan, and Sister Mary and family near Bloomington, Illinois. Also some relatives in Iowa. It was 18 years since they saw their brother and sister in Switzerland.

Sam and Ernest left in the fall of 1899 and traveled by railroad train. They visited a month or more at each place then they began their trip home stopping off at Salt Lake City, Utah, for some sightseeing. Then they continued on their journey home, but before they arrived there Sam left Ernest and went on to Pratum, Oregon, to be married. His wedding day was set for March 22, 1900. A day or two after their wedding, they left by train for Almota, Washington, to make their home in the Onecho community. They went as far as The Dalles, Oregon, then for something a little special they went aboard a riverboat and went up the Columbia and Snake Rivers as far as Almota. Will met them there and took them to his home.

Sam and Ida lived with the Rubins until their house was built. They began building it in September 1900 and it was finished by the end of the year. They moved into it the beginning of 1901.

(Samuel Aeschliman became a citizen of the United States of America in Colfax, Washington, September 24, 1892.)